

## **Colchester & Ipswich Museums – Why you should join us...**

You will be joining CIMS at an exciting time of change and opportunity. CIMS is emerging as a sector leader in its innovative use of collections to inspire creativity and learning. It has an excellent track record of achievement in recent years including:

- The award-winning refurbishment and redisplay of Colchester Castle – the £4.3m project has transformed the Norman castle keep with high quality displays of the Designated archaeology collections. It has upgraded visitor facilities and incorporated digital interpretation including augmented reality apps on hireable tablets and a 16m x 8m *son et lumiere* projection onto the historic castle wall. The Castle re-opened in May 2014 since when it has had over 100,000 visitors and generated over £500k income.
- Overall the joint service received 294,000 visits in 2015-16.
- ACE funded Happening on High Street project has supported the creation of an Artist Ranger post to work with Collections & Learning Curators to explore the creative potential of the diverse and fascinating collections in Ipswich. The project focusing on developing the former Ipswich Art School into a gallery space for innovative and experimental installations and exhibitions blurring the lines between art galleries and museums. The collections and museum spaces will also be a rich resource and source of inspiration for museum partnership projects with the on-site NPO's Pacitti company and New Wolsey Youth Theatre.
- The service has undergone a major restructure with posts re-scoped and new structures implemented. This includes pioneering a new way of working with the Collections & Learning Curators combining previously separate roles.

### **Current and Planned Activities and Projects**

The Collections Information Officers will play a central role in the following areas over the next few years:

#### *At Colchester:*

- Colchester Museums are amalgamating their collection to their off-site store. The Collections Information Officer will play a crucial role, within the Collections & Learning team, in managing this major project. Our collections will be unified for the first time in Colchester Museums' history, providing us with a fantastic opportunity to generate greater access and unlock the hidden stories our collections hold.
- A major programme of access and rationalisation of Colchester's stored collections (including the archaeological archives) has been initiated. This programme is engaging with best practice in the sector and seeks creative

responses to managing and re-envisaging the collections – the Collections Information Officer will be central to facilitating this programme of work. With a new website in production there are plans to provide greater online access to some of our significant stored assets such as the clock, costume and coin collections.

*At Ipswich:*

- Ipswich Museums are undertaking a major retrospective documentation project to significantly improve access to the collections and the information we hold about them. The Collections Information Officer will work closely with the Collections Information Team on this project.
- A major capital consolidation project is underway at Christchurch Mansion and plans are being developed for significant improvements at Ipswich Museum and Art School Gallery. The Collections Information Officer will play a central role in supporting this work and ensuring full documentation procedures are maintained and collections information is shared.

*Across CIMS:*

- ACE have awarded CIMS £666,000 over three years (2015-2018) to deliver the Training Museum programme at CIMS. This programme is supporting the development of a business partnership between the service and University of Suffolk to deliver vocational course content and a degree in museum studies.
- The Training Museum has also part funded Trainee posts to promote sector diversity and to share vocational skills. Our second cohort, of four trainees, have recently been recruited to support the Collections & Learning Team in the delivery of events, exhibitions and learning across our sites. The programme will support workforce development of all staff and encourage skill sharing and the development of best practice.